

## Examples of Programming Policies Michigan, Illinois, and C-Span

### Michigan Government Television (MGTV) Programming Policies

#### MGTV will use its best efforts:

To provide programming that is fair, accurate, balanced and without regard to partisanship or ideology. MGTV's coverage is intended to offer viewers access to government deliberations. MGTV's segments will be unedited;

To provide programming which will be scheduled by the Executive Director in a manner which recognizes the role of timeliness in the value of information. Programming with content which does not lose value through immediacy may be delayed and replayed on a tape delayed basis;

To provide programming and scheduling of telecasts which will reflect a variety of possible subject matter and deliberating bodies. Balance shall also reflect the importance of covering issues of interest to particular geographic areas;

To keep statistics which insure a reasonable representation of the three branches of Michigan government;

To provide programming and scheduling consistent with MGTV's mission with the understanding that MGTV's resources are limited. The MGTV Board delegates full authority to the Executive Director in making decisions.

### C-SPAN's Programming Criteria (non-legislative)

1. The event must be of national interest. It is not just a local event or an event that affects just one part of the country.
2. It must be public policy and not just news. The subject should be timely.
3. There must be federal money involved or federal officials.
4. Coverage must help achieve fairness. The goal is to cover all sides of an issue. Each event does not have to be balanced, but bring to the audience as many views as possible over a course of hours or a course of days.
5. Speaker quality must be high. Is this person an expert on the subject? Does this person have jurisdiction?

### Program Policy Guidelines for the Illinois Channel

1. The Illinois Channel should commit to carry live, gavel-to-gavel coverage of floor debate in the Illinois General Assembly whenever it is in session.
2. It should not be predetermined which legislative body will be covered live and which one will be taped. That decision should be left to the channel's producers who will be following legislation and should be trusted to make the editorial decision as to which body should be covered live on a given legislative day.
3. The Illinois Channel should commit to covering all three branches of government.
4. When covering an event, employees of the Illinois Channel should not ask questions or engage in any action that would reflect a bias. The channel's policy should be only to televise the event and to do so with as little intrusion as possible.
5. When covering legislative bodies, the cameras should be directed primarily at the member recognized by the chair or at the chair him/herself.
6. The channel's producers should be allowed the flexibility to rebroadcast a portion of an event or legislative debate.
7. Illinois Channel programming should be committed to reflecting the range of views across the political spectrum. Illinois Channel producers should allow viewers to witness a range of views and form their own opinions. The Illinois Channel should *not* be a statewide public access channel where anyone can demand coverage and get it.
8. The Illinois Channel must be viewed as objective and nonpartisan in its coverage. While that is a fundamental programming approach, following C-SPAN's example, political balance should be achieved in the overall format, not necessarily in every program that airs.
9. The Illinois Channel should be careful in taking in outside programming but consider accepting programs from outside sources. Such programs should first be reviewed for content, quality and suitability before being aired.
10. Because the mission of the Illinois Channel is to create a statewide public affairs channel, programming should reflect events beyond the state capital and beyond official government branches.